

CHARIVARIA.

EACH side has been complaining of a shortage of vehicles on polling days, and the party which sent a motor bicycle for a voter who was in his eightieth year and suffering from rheumatism lost a supporter.

At the close of his last speech before the poll at Bolton, Colonel HESKETH, the Unionist candidate, was presented by a lady with a horse-shoe. He was, however, defeated at the poll, and this looks as if the horse-shoe, as an emblem of luck, is now hopelessly out of date. Next time, we suspect, the Colonel will be presented with a motor-tyre.

"A—S—, aged thirty-three," we read, "has escaped from Long Grove Asylum, Epsom." We dare wager we all know which party he voted for.

Mr. F. E. SMITH's recent veiled reference to a politician whom he likened to DR-OGENES, who lived in a tub, has been misunderstood by some persons. Mr. SMITH, whose hatred of personalities is not so well known as it should be, was not referring to the figure of our War Minister.

The ignorance of some people is astounding. "What is the meaning of '2D' on that soldier's tunic?" asked an anxious enquirer. "Oh, I suppose it is the price he charges servant-girls for walking out with him," came the answer.

"A safety razor is always an acceptable present." And yet we know an artist with a Vandyck beard who felt grossly insulted on receiving such a gift. Some persons are so touchy.

Speaking of Miss MARIE BREMA's opera season at the Savoy Theatre, *The Musical Times* says:—"As inter-ludes Mr. FRANK BRIDGE has provided some well-conceived arrangements of Breton folk songs, which are appropriate to the surroundings, as the scene is laid in the Belgian Ardennes." We are left thinking.

"WOMEN'S DRESS

VOGUE OF THE BUTTON."

We were frightened when we read these head-lines. It sounds so inadequate. Can this be the *Salome* influence?

"Mr. —," an advertisement tells us, "is the leader of the Petticoat

quite an obsession, has given instructions that in future all articles and paragraphs in his paper are to appear without headlines.

"TRIAL BY SONG.

PRACTICAL TEST FOR STREET VOCALISTS."

There is nothing novel in this. We have all at one time or another gone through this sore trial.

It was stated at a meeting of the Leeds City Council, that the local police were considered the best dressed in the country. They all wear tailor-made costumes.

"There is a boom in sprats at Brightlingsea," we read. "The fish are making 3s. and 3s. 6d. a bushel." It must be an interesting sight to see these bloated creatures going the pace at Brightlingsea, and no doubt the CHANCELLOR has his eye on them.

A "Foot Wear" firm has been advertising an "Election Boot." Its immediate purpose seems to have been achieved with only moderate success, if one may judge by the comparatively small number of Candidates who have been kicked out.

On the subject of the Working-Men Unionists Mr. O. LOCKER-LAMPSON writes:

"If we can secure a sufficient number of motor cars on the polling days in question, the return of at least two of them is absolutely certain."

A sporting car-owner would risk it. There is always the chance that his car may be one of the lucky two.

"On entering the Hiratsura tunnel something went wrong with the locomotive, the train coming to a standstill and remaining in the tunnel some time. Finally the driver managed to get the train into motion, when it was found that one of the drivers was missing. A search was made and the driver was discovered lying unconscious in the funnel."—*Peking Times*.

No wonder the engine wouldn't work.

"Early in the New Year penny postage will be introduced between the United Kingdom and the Australian Commonwealth."—*Pull Mall Gazette*.

One of these days we shall be able to cable to Australia.



THE POINT OF VIEW.

Doubtful Character (as he cautiously looks over garden-wall of a house he has been burgling). "LUMME! I NEARLY RUN INTER THAT BLOKE —NEVER DID LIKE 'IM—NASTY—SNEAKIN'—SUSPICIOUS—UNDER'AND BLIGHTER!"

World." Someone ought to introduce him to the Garter King.

A certain firm which supplies furniture on the deferred payment system, advertises "No security." This announcement is somewhat ambiguous, but we are sure it cannot refer to the furniture.

We hear that the editor of a certain advanced Radical contemporary with whom a hatred of titles has become

the tunnel some time. Finally the driver managed to get the train into motion, when it was found that one of the drivers was missing. A search was made and the driver was discovered lying unconscious in the funnel."—*Peking Times*.

"SALOME."

A DRESS REHEARSAL.

A YELLOW moon, reeking with presage, looked down upon the terrace of the Tetrarch. Beyond the Syrian landscape, the smoke of what I took to be passing trains drifted across an immovable cloud-wrack. Through the palace-entrances shone three great parallelograms of red light, like the slabs of colour you see on a poll-screen when a Conservative victory is about to be recorded. On the terrace stood a well-head, a familiar domestic feature which used to give tone and character to the tetrarchal terraces of those days. A young captain discussed the situation with the page of *Herodias* (contralto). Everybody was in the full dress of the period.

Suddenly there came a pause, and the voice of the conductor (in short sleeves) rang out. "Where is the Prophet?" he cried in bell-like tones. And the answer, as in the case of DE QUINCEY'S reporter, was "*Non est inventus.*" The stage-manager rushed on and peered down the well. The soldiers joined him in the search. It flashed upon me as just possible that Truth, having fled to the bottom of the well during these Elections (I can't get the silly things out of my head), had left no room for the Prophet. But I was in error, for after a dreadful delay he was reported to have arrived—by one of those lower entrances which habitually occur in Syrian wells—and to have sent up word that he couldn't see to read his score, the lighting arrangements at the bottom of a well being almost always inadequate. Meanwhile the curtain was dropped, and eventually we began all over again; and once more, at the same point, there was the same hitch, and once more the voice of Mr. BEECHAM rang out, "Where is the Prophet?" At last the notes of Mr. WHITEHILL'S magnificent organ came filtering up, and the great tragedy moved forward.

Our next shock was when the lithe figure of *Salome* ran on from the halls of festivity in a white blouse and dark skirt, looking extraordinarily occidental, and quite different from the *Salome* of the preliminary boom-photographs. No doubt the local colour was to be there all right on the night, but this afternoon she was saving herself and giving nothing away. As for her voice, she opened her mouth at the proper places, but made no attempt—and I don't blame her—to compete with the noisy cacophonies of the orchestra.

Hearing Mr. WHITEHILL'S voice coming from the cistern, she thought she would like to make his closer ac-

quaintance, and ordered him to be brought up. Greatly attracted by his appearance, she insisted upon kissing him. Mr. WHITEHILL, however, very properly resisted her advances, and after a while withdrew back into the cistern; but not till the young captain, in a spasm of jealousy, had killed himself—an episode in which neither *Salome* nor the Prophet took the faintest interest.

Presently *Herod* emerged in a pea-jacket and trousers to match, accompanied by *Herodias* in ordinary afternoon dress, but without a hat. The Tetrarch was in a fractious mood, and barked out his words like a German officer on early-morning parade. His temper was not improved by the corpse of the captain, into whose blood he had put his foot through an oversight. It seems that the Tetrarch never cared greatly for the sight of dead men unless he had had a hand in their killing. As the *First Soldier*, in the original text, had previously remarked, knowing his *Herod*: "*Il faut faire transporter le cadavre. Le tetrarque n'aime pas regarder les cadavres, sauf les cadavres de ceux qu'il a tués lui-même.*" To which the *Second Soldier*, knowing his OLLENDORFF, had replied: "*Vous avez raison; il faut cacher le cadavre. Il ne faut pas que le tetrarque le voie.*"

Another source of annoyance to the fretful potentate was the way in which a lot of Hebrew sceptics would keep on talking to him all at once about the Prophet. Mr. BEECHAM didn't like it either, and stopped to tell them that they must pay attention to the beat; this, in fact, being what the beat was there for. So they tried again, and I believe that this time they did what he wanted, though I confess that I noticed no difference, so terrible was the *mêlée* of jarring sounds.

Nothing, in the end, would content *Herod* but that *Salome* should dance before him; but she was pensive and not feeling at her best, and frankly hinted that she would prefer to keep still. However, a very large bribe induced her to do the Seven-Veils dance. Seven veils take some time to arrange, and the orchestra seized their advantage. Then *Salome*, who was a little hampered by some of the supers, and let them know it, went through a few easy motions, dropping her veils from time to time all round the place, and strolling and lounging about in between, till the music caught her up. The Tetrarch seemed more satisfied with the performance than I was, and it was a bad set-back for him when he found out what he was expected to pay for it. But *Herod* was a man of his word, and so a Nubian butcher, carrying a

large carving-knife at the salute, was introduced into the cistern.

During the awful interval that ensued the orchestra let itself go. There was one sound, painfully iterated, like the chirrup of a sick hen, which, I think, came from some part of a violin which is usually left alone. From my vantage in the stage box I had already been intrigued by a sort of toy harmonium, from which an acrobat was extracting notes which had never yet come within my experience of instrumental music. Something between the click of muted bones and the smacking of fat cheeks.

And now from the cistern emerged the butcher's knife with a great blotch of red paint smeared along the blade. *Salome* seized and bore it aloft in triumph; then, advancing to the foot-lights, she complained to Mr. BEECHAM that this would never do; it made her fingers messy, and she quite wanted to keep them clean. At this trying moment a happy diversion was created by the appearance of an official with the glad news (so I gathered) that Mr. REDFORD had consented to the use of a dish for the red paint. Or it may have been that the thing had just arrived from the dish-monger's. Anyhow, Mr. BEECHAM and *Salome* were visibly affected by the announcement, and the latter wiped her soiled fingers first on a piece of property and then on a spare part of the robe of a super.

Back we went for a page or two, and this time it was a pewter dish that was handed up from the well—clearly a great assistance to the imagination. So *Salome* carried it to the front, and put it on the floor and lavished endearments on the head that wasn't there.

And all might have ended happily and smoothly with *Herod*'s order to his soldiers (he was now in a thoroughly bad mood) to put her to death, if only the military hadn't been mobilised a shade too soon. "What in the name of — are you doing?" said Mr. BEECHAM; "I'm not half through the opera yet!" An overstatement, if pardonable; for *Salome* had only a few more bars in hand. These she now negotiated, and the impatient soldiery was then free to despatch her beneath their bucklers.

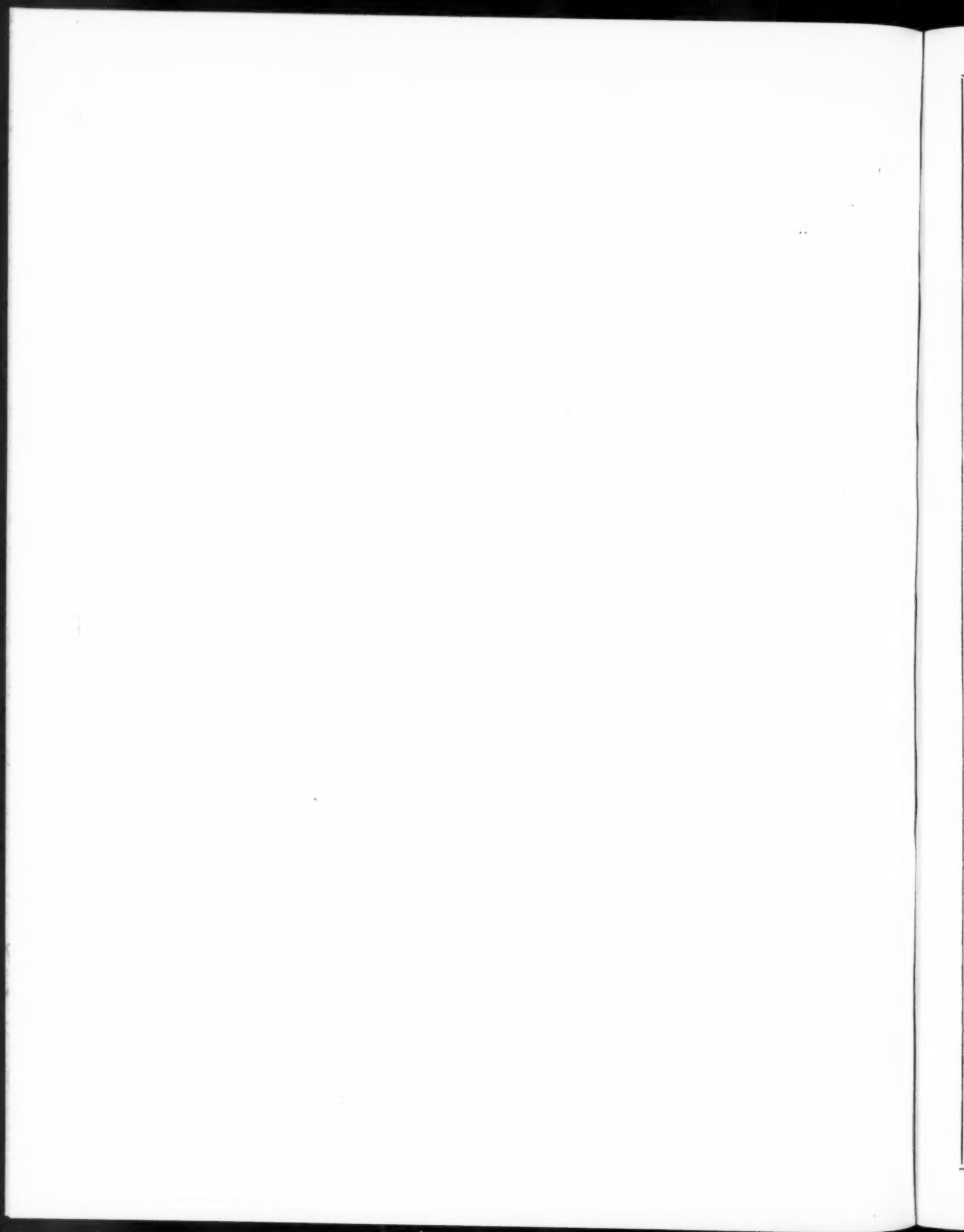
For those who propose to criticise this opera, no vocabulary could be too large or peculiar. I content myself with complimenting Mr. BEECHAM on the prodigies he performed with the bâton, and I gratefully hope that he will soon ask me to another dress rehearsal of an opera: one, for choice, in which Messrs. STRAUSS and CENSOR shall have again collaborated.

O. S.



A STAR IN ECLIPSE.

MISS BUDGET. "AH, LAST YEAR I WAS PRINCIPAL BOY, AND NOW I'M NOT IN THE BILL AT ALL!"





THE POETRY OF MOTION—LATEST DEVELOPMENT: THE JUDY-WALK.

THE MASTIX.

[An attempt to preserve some record of the horror of the scene when "Mastix," a contributor to *The Daily Chronicle*, penned in the Radical interest certain open letters in the manner of "JUNIUS" to Unionist statesmen who had the misfortune to incur his special displeasure.]

DEEP in a den whose outlet yawned betwixt two upas-trees,
Festooned with snakes and vampire bats and horrible things
like these—

Deep in a dark and awesome den where a cockatrice had died,
Slain by the glance of a basilisk who envied his place
inside—

Deep in a stifling sulphurous den, heavy with poisoned air,
Sitting on eighteenth-century eggs—the Mastix had his lair!

Ah, how the foam flew forth his lips, what dragon teeth he
gnashed,

What antediluvian odours rose from every egg he smashed!
With a passion for rage inherited from the cockatrice de-
ceased,

And a glare in the eye as full of bane as a basilisk's at least,
With a cry that had half of a hydra's hiss and all of a
griffin's roar,

And the pounce of a militant suffragette—the Mastix took
the floor!

A spasm tore the universe, a shudder shook the vast,
The ghost of SWIFT was seen to walk and JUNIUS rose
aghast.

Louder, more shrill, the scolding shriek to topmost heaven
scaled,

Whilst Peers held on their coronets and politicians paled,
Till all the horrid tale was told, the criminals attained—
The people staggered to the polls—and then the Mastix
fainted!

HENRY SILVER.

MANY of *Mr. Punch's* oldest friends will share his profound regret at the loss of a veteran member of his staff, HENRY SILVER, who died on the 3rd of December, at the age of eighty-two. His first contribution to the paper was made in 1848, and he joined the Table in 1857, retiring in 1870 on the death of MARK LEMON. His contributions, which were both in prose and verse, included "*Punch's History of Costume*," illustrated by JOHN TENNIEL. Among his closest friends was CHARLES KEENE, whose earliest drawings for *Punch* were of his devising, the first of these being published in 1851. HENRY SILVER was the happy possessor of a fine collection of KEENE's original work.

According to *The Daily Mail* a dairy manager explains the shortage in milk thus:

"One of the reasons was the hard weather of last month, and another is the high price of beer."

How ignorant we laymen are—the second reason would never have occurred to us.

"Clemency preferred not to think so; but Tring's criticism was apt enough; she had a boyish look, despite the broad-brimmed, fashionable hat. The slim figure, the firm, olive column of the throat rising from the plain silk skirt she wore, were essentially boyish."—*Daily Mirror*.
She was wrong. High waists are no longer fashionable.

"The only way is to grow the plants on yourself from cuttings. This will take a few years," says *Gardening Illustrated* in reply to a correspondent. If this is the Japanese gardening, it would account for the chrysanthemum in the Geisha's hair.

A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE.

I.—BEFORE.

THE main ideas of our local campaign were evolved in the small hours. When George is tired of addressing envelopes and James's moisturo has given out and there are no more applicants for the higher literature for me to interview, we gather round the fire, and the Committee Room becomes generally inspired. We allow Crump to take the middle of the stage only because he happens to be our Candidate. On this night in particular we were discussing posters, which, being encouragers of home industries, we invent, print and publish ourselves.

"What we want," said Crump, "is something neat, if possible, but certainly gaudy, plenty of the broader humour with not too much of the subtler sense, personalities but no politics. George, work up all you have heard or supposed of the other fellow's past and put it into a number of pithy questions, beginning 'WHAT ABOUT . . . ?' Say, six fatal innuendos, just on this side of libel, heavy leaded, and a hundred posters of each. Get to it . . . Now, you other fellows, we want some general maxims that will appeal at once to the electorate."

'SINGLE CHAMBER GOVERNMENT MEANS . . .,' I began.

"Never mind about meanings," said Crump. "Just a word, visible from afar and intelligible at sight. A brief command to vote for me."

"PLUMP FOR CRUMP," said James tentatively.

"Five hundred large and a thousand small of 'PLUMP FOR CRUMP,'" said Crump to the Agent. "Then what about the other fellow?"

"OUT WITH GROUT," said James, foolishly. "If only his name had been Grout instead of Brown! What

about 'No Joe'? His name may be Joseph."

"Five hundred large and a thousand small of 'DOWN WITH BROWN.' Next, please."

"Insisting, as I do," I began again, "on a reference, however vague, to a policy of some sort, I suggest 'VOTE FOR TARIFF REFORM AND—'"

This time they would have thrown

"not only do I thank you for myself, but your Country, nay your Empire, thanks you for vindicating those great policies upon which its welfare depends. This is no personal matter. There have been placed before you solemn and serious issues concerning imperial and domestic government, defence and economy, and you, after mature consideration, have pronounced with no

uncertain voice for those high principles of state which form the whole programme of that party which I represent, those principles which we have spared no pains of logical argument and honest ratiocination to establish. You have given your judgment as becomes judges who will hear both sides, but will not tolerate for a moment irrelevant matter, and in so doing you have confirmed the belief which I and far greater men than I have ever held—the belief in the insight, the tenacity, the unvarying sanity and the inevitable wisdom of that infallible tribunal, the People."

THE UNLUCKIEST MAN IN LONDON.

WE were all backing ourselves as the unluckiest of mortals.

"I maintain," he said, "that I am the unluckiest man in London, at any rate. And by bad luck I mean the real unasked-for things. Because you fellows who complain of losses over horses or at bridge don't count.

That's gambling, and gambling must go against you pretty often. No, I mean the bad luck that is thrust upon one. That's where I am a champion. I was unlucky enough before, but taxis have just put the lid on it. I whistle and wait for one for, say, five minutes—which is, of course, under those circumstances, eternity—and then I take the worst hansom in Europe; and a second later three empty taxis creep by. Or in the pouring rain, when I have no artificial whistle with me, and cannot



She. "LIZZIE'S BLOKE CALLS 'ER 'IS PEACH AND THE APPLE OF 'IS EYE. WHY CAN'T YOU CALL ME THINGS LIKE THAT?"

He. "YUS, THAT'S ALL VERY WELL; BUT 'E'S IN THE VEGETABLE BUSINESS—I'M IN THE WHELK TRADE, REMEMBER!"

me out out for Crump. "If he will have it," said he, "we will give it him in leadlet form. Five thousand 'FREE TRADES! P.T.O.'"

"Yes," said I; "and what on the back of it?"

"William," said Crump, sadly, "I see that you are not only a politician, you are also a fool. Go to bed."

II.—AFTER.

"... And, gentlemen," continued Crump to the surging mass below him,

produce any sound but a mild 'Whoa!' from my natural one, a taxi will go by with the flag up, but the driver looking the other way with all the intent earnestness of a statue."

"That reminds me," said another speaker. "What do you do when a driver with his flag up sees you and takes no notice? It's the most infuriating thing in the world. I don't know whether it has ever happened to any of you?"

"It happens to me," said the first man, "every day. I am accurst. And another thing—when I am at haste in a taxi it is always the first vehicle that the policeman stops at a crossing. I head the block. There I sit, no matter what hurry I am in, and watch the meter mounting. It always happens at Wellington Street. Next time you pass there and see the block in the Strand look in the first taxi and you'll find me."

"And finally—to get rid of the taxi indictment—when the time comes to pay the fare I can never get any change out of the brutes. They keep their money, to begin with, in some place compared with which a woman's pocket is the height of accessibility; and then they never have anything there but gold and half-crowns when they find it. So I am always parting with four-pences and sixpences when all I want to give extra is twopence."

"I tell you fellows honestly I long for the dear old days, when cab-horses crawled or fell down, and cab-drivers called you foul names, and you didn't know the worst till you got out. Life was worth living then."

"The Tubes too," he continued, "how one's bad luck has been aggravated by that draughty invention! When I go by Tube the lift-man always bangs the gate while I am getting my ticket, and when at last I reach the platform it is just in time to see the tail light of the train disappearing. Some day the controllers of the Tube (if there are any) will try to arrange a correspondence between lifts and trains. The new system will probably be inaugurated on the day of my funeral. My funeral—O happy thought!"

"Apparently," said another speaker, "your bad luck is associated wholly with what are humorously called London's increased traffic facilities."

"Not at all!" said the unlucky man. "I merely mentioned those first because they are just now the most conspicuous element in the scheme of frustration called my life. I am unlucky in grain. If I go to a picture exhibition and take a fancy to a picture, it is always the one that is sold—perhaps the only one. If I buy a new novel and hurry home to lose myself



Ground-keeper. "DON'T YOU KNOW THAT YOU SHOULD REPLACE THE TURF?"
One of the Golfers. "AW, WE ALWAYS DO, ON THE GREENS."

in it, it has the section from pages 97 to 144 missing. If I send to the library a list of four books that I want, they return four books that I don't want. If I am invited to a house where really good dinners are served, I am bound to have indigestion all that day. If I dine at a restaurant, the only bottle of wine that is corked wanders to my table, and I am the only guest to whom the manager is not amenable under remonstrance. If you ever meet a carefully-dressed man on his way to a lunch party with a spot of mud on his collar, it is me."

"But these things can happen to all of us," said another man.

"Yes," said the grumbler, "but with me there are no exceptions. Some of

you occasionally attend a matinée and see something. I attend matinées and find myself always behind the largest hat—always. When I buy evening seats they either have a pillar right in front of them or the particular man I wanted to see is ill or away on a holiday. "No," he concluded. "I am unlucky. You are unwise to be in my company. It's catching—bad luck is—I'm certain of it. No shrewd man ever has dealings with an unlucky one."

The Christmas Spirit.

"Christmas Excursion to the Riviera—Via Folkestone-Calais: A special express Train will run on Dec. 23rd from Calais to Cannes, Nice, Monte Carlo and Mentone without charge."—*Journal de Bordighera.*

OUT OF THE HURLY-BURLY.

"Our dance," I said; "and it's no good pretending it isn't."

"Come on," said Miss Middleton. "It's my favourite waltz. I expect I've said that to all my partners to-night."

"It's my favourite too, but you're the first person I've told."

"The worst of having a dance in your own house," said Miss Middleton, after we had been once round the room in silence, "is that you have to dance with *everybody*."

"Have you said that to all your partners too?"

"I expect so. I must have said everything. Don't look so reproachfully at me. You are looking reproachful, aren't you?"

I let go with one hand and felt my face.

"Yes," I said. "That's how I do it."
"Well, you needn't bother, because none of them thought I meant *them*. Men never do."

"I shall have to think that over by myself," I said after a pause. "There's a lot in that which the untrained observer might miss. Anyhow, it's not at all the sort of thing that a young girl ought to say at a dance."

"I'm older than you think," said Miss Middleton. "Oh, bother, I forgot. You know how old I am."

"Perhaps you've been ageing lately. I have. This election has added years to my life. I came here to get young again."

"I don't know anything about politics. Father does all the knowing in our family."

"He's on the right side, isn't he?"

"I think he is. He says he is."

"Oh, well, he ought to know... Yes, the truth is I came here to be liked again. People and I have been saying awfully rude things to each other lately."

"Oh, why do you want to argue about politics?"

"But I *don't* want to. It's a funny thing, but nobody will believe me when I say that."

"I expect it's because you say it *after* you've finished arguing, instead of *before*."

"Perhaps that's it."

"I never argue with mother. I simply tell her to do something, and she tells me afterwards why she hasn't."

"Really, I think Mrs. Middleton has done wonderfully well, considering. Some parents don't even tell you why they haven't."

"Oh, I'd recommend her anywhere," said Miss Middleton confidently.

We dropped into silence again. Anyhow, it was *my* favourite waltz.

"You did say, didn't you, the first dance we had together," said Miss Middleton dreamily, "that you preferred not to talk when you danced?"

"Didn't I say that I should prefer to do whatever you preferred? That sounds more like me."

"I don't think it does, a bit."

"No, perhaps you're right. Besides, I remember now what I did say. I said that much as I enjoyed the pleasant give and take of friendly conversation, dearly as I loved even the irresponsible monologue or the biting repartee, yet still more was I attached to the silent worship of the valse's mazy rhythm. 'But,' I went on to say, 'but,' I added, with surprising originality, 'every rule has an exception. You are the exception. May I have two dances, and then we'll try one of each?'"

"What did I say?"

"You said, 'Sir, something tells me that we shall be great friends. I like your face, and I like the way your tie goes under your left ear. I cannot give you *all* the dances on the programme, because I have my mother with me to-night, and you know what mothers are. They *notice*. But anything up to half-a-dozen, distributed at such intervals that one's guardians will think it's the same dance, you are heartily welcome to. And if you care to take me in to supper, there is—I have the information straight from the stable—a line in unbreakable meringues which would well be worth our attention.' That's what you said."

"But what a memory!"

"I can remember more than that. I can remember the actual struggle. I got my meringue down on the mat, both shoulders touching, in one minute forty-three seconds."

The band died slowly down until no sound could be heard above the rustle of frocks... and suddenly everybody realised that it had stopped.

"Bother," said Miss Middleton.

"That's just like a band," I said bitterly.

"I'll tell it to go on again; it's *my* band."

"It will be your devoted band if you ask it prettily enough."

Miss Middleton went away, and came back to the sound of music, looking rather pleased with herself.

"Did you give him the famous smile?" I asked. "Yes, that one."

"I said, 'Would you mind playing that one again, please?' And then—"

"And then you looked as if you were just going to cry, and at the last

moment you smiled and said, 'Hooray.' And he said, 'Certainly, madam.' Isn't that right?"

"I believe you're cleverer than some of us think," said Miss Middleton a trifle anxiously.

"I sometimes think so too. However, to get back to what we were saying—I came here to recover my usual calm, and I shan't be at all calm if I'm only going to get this one dance from you. As an old friend of the family, who has broken most of the windows, I beg for another."

"To get back to what I was saying—I've simply *got* to do a lot of duty dances. Can't you take me to the Zoo or the Post-Impressionists instead?"

"I'd rather do both. I mean all three. No, I mean both."

"Well, perhaps I would, too."

"You know, I think you'd be doing good. I've had a horrible week—canvassing, and standing in the streets, and shouting, and reading leaders, and arguing, and saying, 'My point is perfectly simple,' and—and—swearing, and all sorts of things. It's awfully jolly to—to feel that there's always—well, *all this*," and I looked round the room, "to come back to."

"Isn't that beautiful Miss Ellison I introduced you to just now part of 'all this'?"

"Oh, yes, it's all part; but—"

Miss Middleton sighed.

"Then that nice young man with the bald head will have to go without. But I only said I'd see if I could give him one. And I have seen, haven't I?"

The band really stopped this time, and we found a comfortable corner.

"That's very jolly of you," I said, as I leant back lazily and happily. "Now let's talk about Christmas."

A. A. M.

A Growing Reputation.

Describing a Sunday afternoon meeting at Whitefield's Tabernacle, addressed by Dr. CLIFFORD, *The British Weekly* says:

"When he chanced to name Mr. Lloyd George, there was a burst of cheering. Each man in the audience seemed to know the Chancellor."

But you don't need to be Radicals in a place of worship for that. We all seem to know him.

"'Oh, Harry!' in reproof. 'You wicked old thing!' But she saw it was rather a dangerous line to pursue. The mere thought of failure now sent a shiver down her spine."

And so the day drew on.

(To be Continued on Monday.)
Daily Express.

Evidently this shiver occurred on a Sunday.



HOUSE-PLANNING.

SOMETIMES INTERNAL COMFORT HAS TO BE SACRIFICED TO EXTERNAL BEAUTY, AND THIS IS THE CAUSE OF SOME SLIGHT INCONVENIENCE—

WHEN THE PLUMBER COMES INTO YOUR BEDROOM TO EXAMINE THE CISTERN AT 6.30 A.M. ;

WHEN THE BATHROOM AND SCULLERY ARE COMBINED ;

WHEN THE DUSTMAN'S ONLY WAY LIES THROUGH THE DRAWING-ROOM ;

WHEN THE ROOF-LINES OF THE PICTURESQUE STUDY GET IN YOUR WAY ; AND WHEN THE LARDER WINDOW FACES SOUTH.



GOOD BUSINESS.

Our Club Oracle. "WOT I SAY IS, GOOD LUCK TO BALFOUR AND D— THE VETO BILL!"

Alert Stewardess. "PASS THE HOSPITAL-BOX, PLEASE. ONE PENNY FOR EACH SWEAR-WORD, BUT AS IT'S OUR ELECTION TIME YOU'LL BE ALLOWED SEVEN FOR SIXPENCE."

LEFT STANDING.

THE line, by request, I've been toeing;
The fight has been frantic and free;
I think I know all that's worth
knowing
Of the woes of a would-be M.P.
My highly-strung nerves are in tatters,
My appetite's wretchedly small,
I've a headache that hammers and
batters—
And I didn't get in after all!

The brew of the local soup-kitchen
I drank with a counterfeit zest,
Large circles of fat it was rich in,
And soup I can never digest.
And later, where footballers gathered,
I modestly kicked-off the ball;
With mud I was lavishly lathered—
And I didn't get in after all!

I fawned on the street-corner loller,
I dandled the babes of the slum,
They slobbered all over my collar,
But I beamed, and cooed, "Doodle-
di-dum!"
I was garnished with ribbons and
"pretties"
Like an ox in cattle-show stall,
I flirted with female committees—
And I didn't get in after all!

My meetings were savagely stirring,
Ripe eggs and tomatoes I faced,
The aim of the brutes was unerring
And I was so publicly placed.
I sought to ensure my survival
With fictions I'd gladly recall,
Ignobly insulting my rival—
And I didn't get in after all!

EXCITING INCIDENTS AT THE POLLS.

THE first man to record his vote at Clodbury yesterday was an Old Age Pensioner, with a wooden leg made from a beam of H.M.S. *Victory*.

Mrs. Ma... Smithers, of Blightham, presented herself at the polling station on Saturday for the forty-fifth time. On being informed by the Returning Officer that she would not be allowed to vote she went home.

Owing to the prevailing floods no voters appeared at Slushington, and the chief polling-clerk was presented with a pair of white gloves.

At Azuregore a member of the idle rich class was so exhausted after mak-

ing a cross on his voting paper that he had to be assisted to his motor car by three footmen.

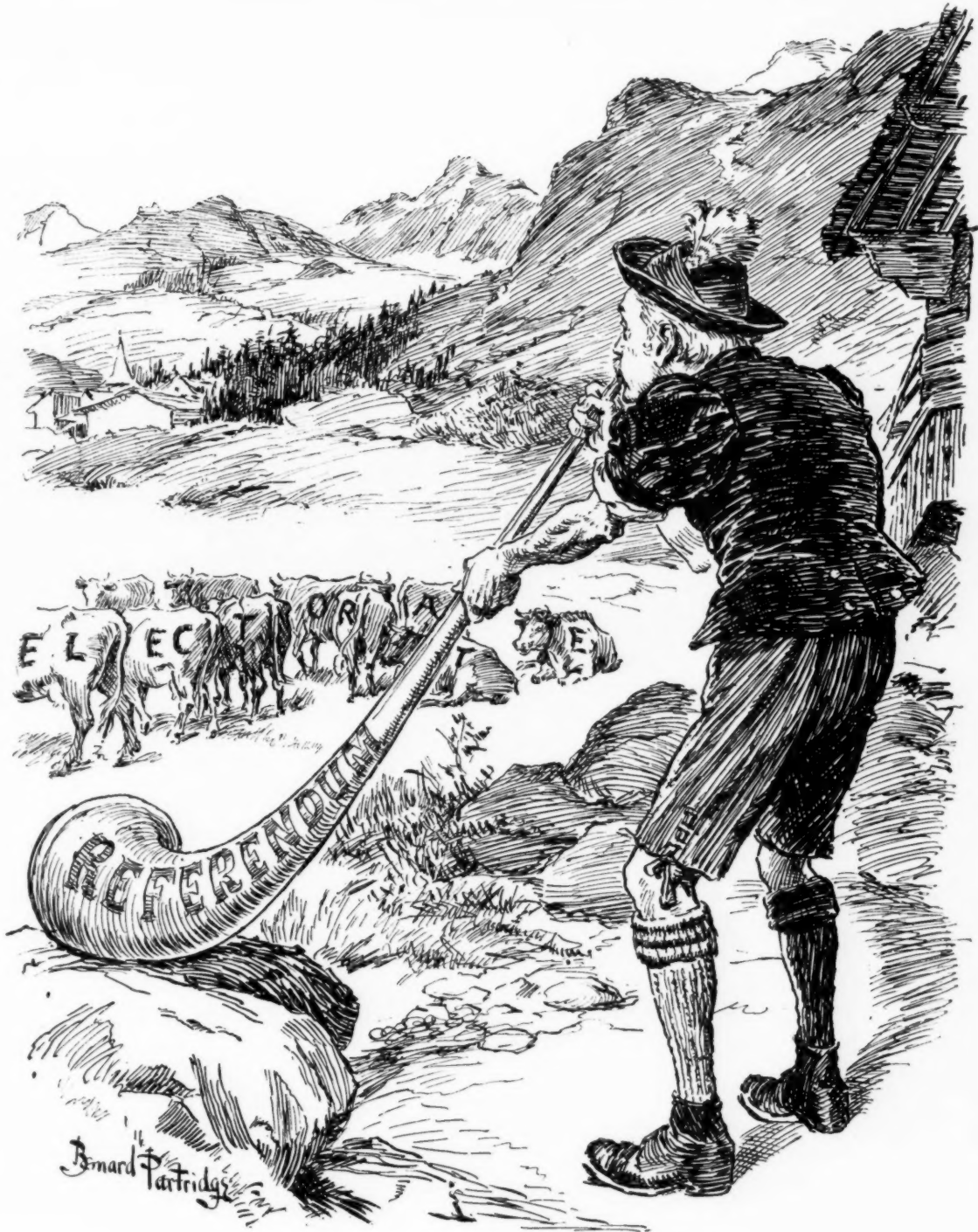
A great saving in pencils has been effected in the Coalford constituency, where the sturdy miners prefer to make the necessary mark with their fingers.

A tired polling-clerk at Slowtown had an unpleasant experience last evening. As the last vote was being recorded he gave a tremendous yawn and was mistaken by the elector for a ballot-box. Both Candidates claim the vote.

"The expression on the smiling face was so hateful that Saxon's arm shot out one blow, struck the other between the eyes, turned on his heel, and left the house."—*T-t-Bits*.
Our own arm turns on our shoulder, but we have no wish to sneer at Saxon on that account.

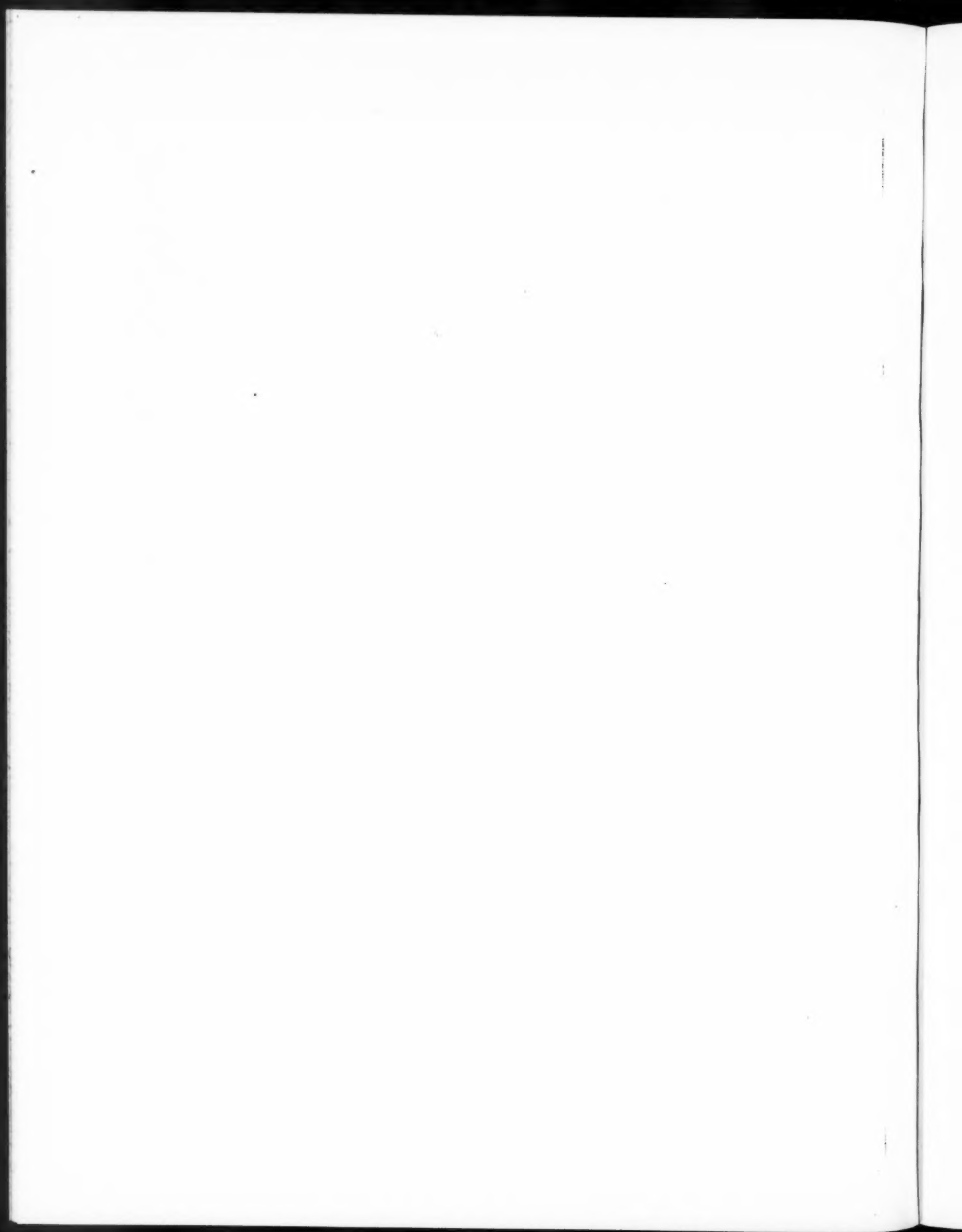
"The Liberals realise that the adoption of the Referendum as a main plank in the Unionist programme has completely spiked their guns."—*Daily Graphic*.

The best way of doing this is to cut it up into little wedges.



CALLING THE CATTLE HOME.

ARTHUR BALFOUR (*the Merry Swiss Boy*). "THEY DON'T SEEM TO TAKE MUCH NOTICE OF THIS THING. PERHAPS I HAVEN'T PRACTISED IT LONG ENOUGH."



RUY LOPEZ.

THERE were no almonds this year on the almond tree over the way; a great sorrow, if I picture the man rightly, to the owner of the tree, an incalculable benefit to the morals of the district, and a spring of gentle meditation to my landlady and myself.

Last year there was a fine crop, and except during their hours of enforced idleness in the schoolroom, the children of the neighbourhood were busy with them all day long. Infants who were not old enough to hurl books and brickbats and errand-baskets up into the boughs were brought by their elders to be shown what they might do in time if they were good. It used to be quite dangerous to walk on that side of the road when the girls were holding target practice with their arithmetics.

The proprietor of the tree made very little effort to stop the looting, and I think on the whole he rather liked it. You see, the very possession of this rarity marked him out as a man above his neighbours on either side, who ran to nothing better than a mere elder-bush and a small horse chestnut; it gave him a kind of Byronic personality, something of the glamour of the South; and this constant pillaging only called attention to it. At any rate, it was a long time before he had the fruit picked, and even that was a sort of simple pageant in its way. The man-of-all-work propped a ladder against the trunk and went up it. Every five minutes or so he would strike a branch and knock down two or three of the fruit, and then wait until a friend came along. "Hullo! what you got there?" the latter would say. "Wornuts?" "Hammonds," he would reply, expectorating with a sort of quiet dignity. But for my landlady and me the emotions stirred by this piece of vegetation were neither those of pride nor gluttony, but the pleasures of a ruminative philosophy. It was our third conversational gambit. That is why (perhaps you wondered when I was going to get to my title)—that is why I have christened it Ruy Lopez; that and a deference for its romantic Southern origin.

For a long time the only two topics which aroused a responsive thrill in my landlady's heart when she brought in the breakfast were the weather and the latest tragedy or crime. Then one morning I happened to mention the almond tree, and in a moment I knew that we had yet another enthusiasm in common. The fact that the blossom of this species arrives before its leaves, the mystery of its exotic birth-place, the size and colour of the fruit, the



"A LA LANTERNE!"—A STUDY IN BRITISH (REVOLUTIONARY) ENTHUSIASM.

DELIRIOUS TRANSPORTS OF A TRIUMPHANT ELECTORATE ON LEARNING, AS THE RESULTS ARE POSTED UP, THAT BY THEIR SUPERHUMAN EFFORTS THEIR COUNTRY HAS BEEN SAVED, AND THAT A GREAT DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION IS ON THE POINT OF FRUITION.

ravages of the wind on its foliage, evoked numberless profound and useful discourses on the mutability of Nature and the vicissitudes of human affairs. Mind you, I never overdid it; but when things had been very dull and gloomy I would say to myself on going to bed, "To-morrow shall be an almond-tree morning," and I woke up with a sort of glow of pleasurable excitement; and though it is now winter and the leaves are gone, we still remark from time to time on the strange absence of fruitage this year as contrasted with last, and remind each other that the road was not nearly so merry without the children. But I have a haunting fear of the next few months. How shall we keep the subject warm? Perhaps—but I am not sure—perhaps I shall tell my landlady the history of *Tannhäuser*.

The Dictator.

"ASQUITH CANNOT WIN NOW.

LORD ROSEBERY SAYS 'IF THE GOVERNMENT LOSE BUT 5 SEATS IN BALANCE THEY CANNOT PROCEED WITH THEIR PROJECTS.'"

Full Mall Gazette.

If the worst comes to the worst Mr. ASQUITH can always ask Lord ROSEBERY to re-consider his decision.

A FRESH SUBJECT.

["Shyness suffers painfully from clammy hands, and no poet has yet hymned the clammy clasp."—*Daily Paper.*]

HANDS and the man I sing, whose nervous mien
And clammy clasp (which he would love to lose)
Have hitherto invariably been
Omitted by the Muse.

And who could do it better? Do not I
Display the symptoms that the hard world mocks,
Being in point of fact a modest, shy
Pansy (in shrinking socks)?

I know, when striving to appear my best,
The blush, the silent tongue, the head that swims,
And feel like flappers at their flappiest,
All arms and—other limbs.

And so I feel no proud contempt for such
As shyness troubles, since their clasp within
My own's enough to prove one clammy touch
Of nature makes us kin.

BLANCHE'S LETTERS.

A NEW MOVEMENT—THE LATEST CURE.

Park Lane.

DEAREST DAPHNE,—I've started a Movement! In these horrible times of alarms and excursions and strikes and elections and class hatreds and all that sort of thing, I consider it the duty of *nous autres* to try to bring all classes together, and do away with bitterness, you know, and make those poor, dear things see that we mean kindly towards them and want to soften their lots, and everything of that kind. So I've founded the Smiling League, and I believe it will have immense results, and will do more towards settling the country than any number of Conferences or similar nonsensical things.

The Smiling League, of which I'm Perpetual President and Patroness, makes all its members pledge themselves to go among the People and Smile at them. Members have simply rolled in. I've two seekies hard at it all day, enrolling fresh members and sending out pledge-forms. Of course the idea is that all members must have the right sort of smile. But people who haven't will insist on joining. That's your poor Blanche's fly in the ointment. Mrs. Croppy Vavasour, for instance, one of our first and most enthusiastic members, has a smile that I've heard Norty (who, of course, is her brother-in-law) say is one of the greatest trials their family has ever had! She went off the other day on Smiling League business, had her motor drawn up in front of one of the big East End factories, and, as the workers came out, she smiled at them. They gathered round the car, but they didn't seem at all pleased or happy or softened or anything of that kind; and—well, my dear, it ended by her chauffeur having to drive off as quick as possible, for they began to throw things! I'm in a regular hole about it. I simply can't let her go about on Smiling League business any more. Yet I really don't know how to make her see that her sort of smile does more harm than good.

The League gave its first dance the other night at the Piccadilly Galleries. It was a Doll Dance, and everyone was

sweet enough to say it was immensely well done. I was voted absolutely *It* as an old-fashioned bisque doll, with little dumpy curls all round my head, a bunchy gauze skirt looped up with roses, white stockings and bronze boots. Babs, being literary, came as a doll-penwiper, with a crinoline and ever so many different-coloured graduated skirts. Some of the other good ones were Bosh and Wee-Wee as the man and woman out of an old toy farm (Wee-Wee's wooden figure and skirt awfully well done!); Popsy, Lady Ramsgate, as a Lord Fauntleroy boy-doll; Beryl Clarges as a Dutch ditto, and Norty as a golliwog. We kept up the characters of dolls, winding each other up, squeaking, and saying Pa-pa and Ma-ma, and so on, and altogether

the fourth, on your back again, and so you go on till you can dispose of twenty or thirty of these eggs a day. The result is that, if you're old, you grow young; if you're young you never grow old; and the complexion gets a bloom, and the eyes a soft brightness that only eggs with a long, long past can give. There's just one little thing that you must be careful about. You must make every effort to banish entirely the expression of face you had while eating the eggs. For, of course, it's not of much use having blooming cheeks and bright eyes if, at the same time, you've an expression of disgust that amounts almost to horror. This is what's happened to Beryl Clarges. She looks utterly, all but her expression, and that is simply terrifying!

One of the latest thrills is that the Middle-shires are so hard hit by this Land Tax that the duke is selling his land for whatever it will fetch, and Lala has gone into business. That's nothing new, of course. Numbers of people whose luck is dead out have gone into business. It's Lala's line of business that's the thrill. She was always a serious person, and she has opened a *Maison de Deuil* and calls herself an *Artiste Funèbre*. She not only supplies sweet toilettes, from widow's first to lightest complimentary, but conducts the melancholy affairs that have hitherto been left



First Bricklayer. "ARK, BILL—WHAT A MEXTRODINARY COINCIDENCE! THERE'S THE DINNER WHISTLE!"

it went with a howl, and has brought a big addition to the funds of the Smiling League.

The sour-milk treatment is completely cut out by the bad-egg cure. People are utterly obsessed by it. The eggs must be quite quite past praying for, and you must train yourself to eat an immense number of them. You begin with one egg—we'll call it an egg with a *poet*, or a *problem* egg, or an egg with *views*, for "bad" is not a pretty word, is it, my dearest? and one's chary of using it nowadays even to an egg—and eat it in spoonfuls, counting twenty after each spoonful. Then you lie on your back for ten minutes. Then you begin your *second* problem egg, counting between the spoonfuls in the same way, and after you've finished it you lie on your *right* side for ten minutes. After the third egg you lie on your *left* side, and after

to tradespeople—and does it *à merveille*. Old Lady Humpington's funeral the other day was a complete triumph for Lala. The poor old dear's parties used to be ghastly affairs, duller and drearier than most funerals. But, *en revanche*, her funeral was a simply charming function, perfectly well done, and with several new features. Lala's overwhelmed with business from the out-lying tribes. Her fee to them is five hundred guineas, and another five hundred if she goes to the funeral and allows her name to appear as a mourner in the papers. For another five hundred she will advise bereaved suburban when to change, and when it would be quite correct to accept invitations to dine and dance and so on. Her mourning gowns and confections are so becoming and full of snap that I hear of people inventing relatives and then killing them on purpose to



Housekeeper at Lord X.'s. "AND WHICH WAY DID YOU VOTE, MR. BUDD!"

Butler. "THE 'OLE OF THIS ELECTION HAS BEEN FOUGHT ON CLARSE 'ATRED, MRS. TIMMS, AND IS DIRECTED AGAINST HUS, AND I DID MY DUTY ACCORDIN'!"

give her an order. Just as I was feeling I *must* get something there, by a lucky chance Josiah heard that some relative of his had died somewhere. Of course, the rule in mourning is that when people don't count and live a long way off, you *don't* mourn. But Lala's *demi-devil* for people and doggies is so absolutely top-hole that darling Pom-pom and I have gone into violet and white (the little thingy-thing looks *ravissant*, and his teeny-weeny, mauve-bordered pockyhankies and mauve silk socks are joys for ever!). The best of it is, my dear, that Josiah is so *gratified*—his word, not mine—at the respect shown to the memory of his first uncle once removed that he's given me a dilly new set of Russian sables.

Ever thine, BLANCHE.

THE VICTOR.

ANOTHER gain "for the Peers" had been shown on the screen, and the young man with the mild and prominent eyes lifted up his voice and

cheered, as if he represented in his own commonplace person the last reserve of England's chivalry.

"Ray, 'Ra-ay, 'Ra-a-ay!" he shouted, with the reckless *abandon* of one who has put it to the touch to win or lose everything in a last hot contest with the growing forces of a new era.

A cross person, wedged at his elbow, turned to him with a scowl, and said, "What price Peckham?"

The young man gave a quick, uninterested glance at the speaker, settled his head more comfortably into his collar, and gazed up at the illuminated screen again, his face radiant with a happy expectancy.

It was a win "for the People" this time.

Instantly his voice rose high, as if he saw already with the Seer's prophetic eye the passing of the dark shadow of feudal tyranny and the dawn of a glorious age of freedom at last.

"Ray, 'Ra-a-a-y!" he yelled—a long, lingering cry of triumph, in which was the making of many headaches.

"Enjoying yerself, ain't you?" said the rude person in front of him, with some asperity. "Wot you cheer 'em both for? Can't you keep to your own side and give us a chance?"

"That's all right," replied the young man contentedly, "it's quite all right—'Ra-a-ay! I've always been used to havin' a good old shout at election times. Used to cheer my own party once; but now, what with this—this—" he made a dash at it, slurring the words over prudently—"this Tarriveto and Rifferaffendum and all, I don't know what *anybody's* at. So I cheer 'em all, and get twice as much shoutin' as ever I did before. Jolliest election I've ever been in."

Again the magic-lantern spoke.

"Hi! Yi! Yoi! 'Ra-a-ay!" he bawled ecstatically; and I edged away to the extreme limit of his sphere of influence.

But I was glad to have seen him in all his simple greatness—the one man who had managed to extract contentment unalloyed out of the election results of December 1910.

WORD FOR WORD.

Extract from "The Ploughchester Advertiser," December 3, 1910.—A very successful meeting was brought to a close by Mr. James Harbutt, C.C., who in his usual stirring fashion proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman. Mr. Harbutt's reception showed that his great popularity has been in no way impaired by the unfair attacks which have been made upon him in connection with the Dilbury Gas-works scheme.

From Mr. James Harbutt to the Editor of "The Ploughchester Advertiser," December 3, 1910. (Not for publication.)

SIR,—I think I have some rights to complain of the manner in which my speeches are reported in your paper. For instance, to-day you print the speeches of Mr. Burncastle and Captain Pilditch all but in full, but you don't give a word of mine, which was the same length, and my friends assure me it was quite as important. There must be something behind this, but what it is I can't make out. If my speech had been fairly reported I was ready to take one hundred copies for distribution to my friends so as to help the Cause. I shall be much obliged if you will see to this, for if it is left as it is it cannot help your paper.

Yours fly, JAMES HARBUTT.

From the Editor of "The Ploughchester Advertiser" to Mr. James Harbutt, December 5, 1910.

DEAR SIR,

Yours of December 3.

I regret to find that you are not satisfied with the manner in which your speeches have been reported in the columns of this paper. I might perhaps urge that considerations of space do not always make it easy to give as full a report of speeches as I should like. I have, however, issued instructions which will, I trust, make a repetition of your complaint unnecessary. As you are billed to speak at the Barlington Town Hall on Wednesday, may we have the pleasure of booking your order for one hundred copies?

Faithfully yours,

HENRY SLIMMINGTON, Editor.

From Mr. James Harbutt to the Editor of "The Ploughchester Advertiser," December 6, 1910.

DEAR SIR,—Your letter is what I should have expected from one in your position. Kindly arrange for one hundred copies of next Saturday's *Advertiser* to be sent direct from the office as per list of addresses enclosed herewith. I also enclose P.O. for the required amount including postages.

Yrs fly, JAMES HARBUTT.

Extract from "The Ploughchester Advertiser," December 10, 1910.

The proceedings were brought to a close by a vote of thanks to the Chairman and the speakers, proposed by Mr. James Harbutt, C.C., who spoke as follows:—

Mr. Chairman—a hum—Ladies and—er—Gentlemen, before we separate there is one thing more. (A Voice: "C.") Did anyone say "Gas"? (A Voice: "That's what you're talking, ain't it?") Loud laughter.) I am quite open to correction—a hum—like any other man who's tried—ah—(A Voice: "You keep on trying, Jimmy.") Laughter—who's tried—(A Voice: "Try, try again.") Another Voice: "Give him a chance"—who's tried—(A Voice: "Get on with it")—to carry out an improvement which isn't—(A Voice: "Wanted. No, it ain't"). My duty, and a very—er—a very important—and—ahum—it has been a proud moment—er—confided to me—to support those in this crisis—(A Voice: "By laying gas-pipes where they ain't wanted")—who have come forward in this election which has turned

on (A Voice: "The gas." Loud and long-continued laughter, in the midst of which Mr. Harbutt was understood to move the vote of thanks).

The audience then sang the National Anthem, all standing, and a very successful meeting ended at five minutes before ten.

TO A DECEMBER GROUSE.

(Heard from the Smoking-room.)

NAY, is it now you 'd have me take the hill,

Voice from the snow line, far away and mocking?

In August, well, you might have roused a thrill,

But now, when sleet showers drive and pines are rocking

In the keen north-east wind,

I find

The cheery hearth and a dry boot and stocking

More to my mind

Than the wet mountain and your wild cok-coking!

In August, yes, 'twas doubtless vastly well,

When butterflies and bees and guns together

Made holiday in dingle and in dell,

To seek you 'mid a charm of sky and weather,

With a fair interlude

For food,

In sunshine that could tan one's cheeks to leather,

Before I strewed

Again your youthful kind upon the heather!

I know the game to-day—the snow, the blast

Down which the swinging packs will whirr and whizz hard,

I 'd hear your ramping pinions whistle past,

And—I should miss you, nipped of nose and gizzard,

And drain the futile dram,

And dam

The braes, the bleakness, and the brutal blizzard,

For oh, I am

A chilly thing and "meagre as a lizard"!

I come not at your challenge, haughty bird!

Let the more earnest and the harder bitten,

If they should choose to make themselves absurd,

Compass your end in mackintosh and mitten;

I find my sole desire

The fire,

And this great padded chair which now I sit on,

Nor shall I tire

Of pipes and papers and the Persian kitten!

We have often wished to take up musical criticism. Literary criticism is a dull thing, for one can never really let oneself go; but in the life of every musical critic there come times when his art demands from him such things as this:

"He cared not a jot for his audience, except that he valued the responsiveness he fetched out of them to himself to deepen and heighten the heights and depths which he wanted to reach up and get down to." Or, if the note of criticism must be sounded too, this:

"His solos were memorised, but not with that success which will doubtless come in after years. If some phrases were omitted and others somewhat mixed, we have no cause for surprise—they were due to the impossibility of memory carrying too much at the stage of its development."

To *The Bury Times* our compliments.

From a Candidate's letter to the electors:

"I sincerely regret that very serious illness has prevented my calling upon you or in fact leaving my bed."

It is more usual to leave one's card.



Candidate (who has spent a precious half-hour being pleasant to old lady). "WELL, GOOD-BYE, MRS. SMITH, I HOPE YOUR HUSBAND IS ALL RIGHT."

Mrs. S. "I 'OPES SO, SIR—IT'LL BE SIX MONTHS COME CHRISTMAS SINCE 'E DIED."

MISSING NUMBERS.

WHAT I want to know is—why do not some of my favourite publications issue Christmas numbers?

There's *The Quarterly Review*, for instance. Same old cover every year, and not even a verse or two by GEORGE R. SIMS to introduce a touch of the festive season. Where's its enterprise? Why shouldn't the autumn number have a nice Christmassy picture cover (a masked man with a reddened dagger, or something of that kind), and include an illustration or two, such as Miss ZENA DARE, a group of Waits with a howling dog in the snow, and a Mother's Darling or His First Trousers—something that the children can understand and really love. Add a complete novel by the authoress of *Her Massive Transgression*, and 32 pages of special advertisements; then double the price to 12s. net—and what more could anybody want?

Then there's that old favourite, the *A.B.C., or Alphabetical Railway Guide*. It has never given a single coloured plate away within my memory. Always

with the same yellow cover and full of dull, uninteresting figures. Why doesn't it issue its December number at the beginning of November, like the up-to-date monthlies, have it in the shape of the outline of a railway engine, and charge a shilling for it? The proprietors would sell thousands more if they brightened it up a bit. Why not a competition, offering prizes of ten shillings and five shillings to the two readers who first discovered mistakes in the information given regarding fast trains to the North and to the West Country? Or a real guard's whistle to the child who was first to send in the exact total, in centuries, years, months, weeks, days, hours and minutes, of all the times mentioned in the book. It lacks *vim*, you know.

And *The Lancet*—I am so fond of *The Lancet*; but it never attempts to meet the Christmas demand. Of course I know that it has said that Christmas fare is the most digestible that can be eaten. But such a statement is very inadequate at Christmas time. Has not the time arrived when it might give us coloured illustrations

to a popular article on the symptoms and disorders of a healthy person who by choice or in mistake has a chop, a piece of cheese, and a cup of coffee for his Christmas dinner?

The Storey-Teller.

"Mr. Balfour said he was going to reconstruct it, to build a new edifice, and so he told them something about his new edifice. Let them examine the ground plan, and see how many storeys it was to have."

Mr. Birrell at Lowestoft.

MR. BIRRELL, we think, was ill-advised to ignore the elevation.

"Twice a day and once a week the hands should be rubbed all over with a slice of lemon."—*Week's Dispatch*.

The question of whether to do it once a week as well might safely have been left to the owner of the lemon.

More Clerical Intolerance.

"Canon Horsley stated at the Southwark Diocesan Conference last week that he goes nearly every Sunday afternoon at a Nonconformist Chapel."—*Bermondsey Recorder*.

"WANTED, 1 flat, ½ tube West End, rent 8s. 6d., at once."—*Advt. in "Evening News."*

Can't be done at the price!

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks.)

I WONDER if the persons who illustrate popular novels fully realise their responsibility. Here, for example, on the cover of *The Golden Silence* (METHUEN) the artist would have me believe that the heroine of C. N. and A. M. WILLIAMSON's fascinating story was a plump flapper of a type which, though it might possibly appeal to others, I should myself find detestable. Fortunately, however, I drew my idea of *Victoria* from the inside of the book, not the outside; and I am ready to confess that I fell in love with her before our friendship was more than a few pages old. The scene of *The Golden Silence* is North Africa, whither *Victoria* had come on a romantic quest after her long-lost sister, who, years before, had married a native and disappeared. Being the heroine of the tale, *Victoria* naturally meets *Stephen Knight*, the hero, on the voyage out. Less to be expected is her rather improbable conduct in trusting herself to the guidance of a strange Arab chief,

who takes her (with *Stephen Knight* in pursuit) many weeks' journey into the desert. Eventually *Saidee*, the missing one, is discovered, but only as the centre of a mystery, which I shall not spoil your pleasure by indicating, except to say that her rescue is a work of difficulty and danger. At this point, indeed, the story, hitherto leisurely, works up to some quite breathless chapters; but eventually, of course, all comes right. True, there is still a slight complication in the case of

Stephen, who began the adventure engaged to someone else; but this, like the love affairs of *Mr. Toots*, is "of no consequence really," and didn't worry me in the least, once *Victoria* and he were restored to civilisation. An excellent and almost motor-less tale, upon which I tender to C. N. and A. M. my sincere congratulations.

MR. C. J. CUTCLIFFE HYNE does not seem to me to have made the most of his idea in *Empire of the World* (EVERETT). He conceives an inventor who discovers a mysterious ray which can annihilate iron. Whether the iron be in a *Dreadnought*, or an Atlantic cable, or a printing press, when once the ray is directed at it, from no matter what distance, it slowly dissolves into nothing. *Empire of the World* is an adequate description of what is within the reach of the possessor of such a power; but Mr. HYNE's man, while terrorising Germany as the anonymous proprietor, can get nothing better for himself in his own name than a job as fitter in an electrical tramway workshop. He does in the end float a mine in Mexico and marry an heiress, but the ray does not help him in either. The book is interesting to read, and I wanted to get to the end to see what happened, but when I was there it was

so tame that I regretted not having lingered over the exciting parts.

A school story by the author of *Godfrey Martin* is something to look forward to each year. CHARLES TURLEY's latest book, *A Scout's Son* (NELSON), shows all those qualities which have given him his special position in the regard of boys and parents. Chief of these qualities is a gift for characterisation which many workers in this field are content to do without. *Trumper*, the Scout's son, is, I think, a new figure in school-boy fiction. Born at Mafeking, and spending his early years in the wild places of the world, he enters Rossborough at fourteen to find the world of public school life something entirely mystifying. For *Beckenham major*—a hero of the Eleven and Fifteen, worshipped by the small boys—he feels not the slightest reverence. The thought of this great man (who is also Head of the House and a few other things as well) inspires him with no fear; indeed, he openly criticises him in (horrors!) an American slang which Rossborough does not use. How he settles down gradually into the school ways, learning much from his new friends and in return opening their eyes to much which they had formerly taken for granted, is told by Mr. TURLEY with his accustomed ease and humour. *A Scout's Son* is a good deal more than the mere "gift-book" which its cover proclaims it, and the grown-up is therefore strongly advised not to present it to his boy without first reading it himself. He will find it better worth his attention than many of the books which he



Extract from local paper.—"MANY OF THE GUESTS INVITED TO THE MAYOR'S FIRST FANCY DRESS BALL HAD MAINTAINED THE GREATEST SECRECY ABOUT THEIR COSTUMES, WITH THE IDEA OF STRIKING A NOTE OF INDIVIDUALITY, AND MANY STARTLING IMPRESSIONS RESULTED."

buys for himself and would not allow his boy to read.

My chief impression after reading Miss RHODA BROUGHTON's *The Devil and the Deep Sea* (MACMILLAN) is one of regret that so much cleverness should be wasted upon such unsatisfactory people. *John Green* or *Bill Street* or *Tom Rutland* left Eton, Christ Church, and a "three-storey high window" precipitately, and his last precipitation was so abrupt that he took to a *chaise longue* and the Riviera. There, as an interesting invalid, he lied wildly to *Miss Field*, who also had "a screw loose." If I am to read of a liar I confess to a hope that he should lie well, but not even this merit pleads in his favour, and I cannot imagine how *Miss Field* could expect to be happy with him. It is true that her father had appropriated trust-money, but that does not seem a sufficient reason for marrying a confirmed scamp. But perhaps she did not stick to him, for the book ends by asking, "Did she, or did she not?" For my own part I was so little interested in both her actions and intentions that I was even grateful for the incessant sincerity of a vulgar girl from Australia. I must not, however, forget that the book contains an excellent portrait of a prig, and is written in the style we expect from its author.